



State Enhanced 9-1-1

Washington Military Department
Emergency Management Division

IN AN EMERGENCY, 911 SAVES LIVES

What is Enhanced 9-1-1?

The emergency phone number, 9-1-1, is truly a lifesaver. A call to 9-1-1 provides direct access to police, fire, and medical emergency responders.

Enhanced 911 (E911) services have been available to the state's wireline 9-1-1 users since 1998. An E911 system automatically displays on a computer screen at the 9-1-1 center the caller's name, phone number, and address/location, making a speedy response possible.

E911 dramatically increases the lifesaving potential of the public safety response system, particularly when the caller is unable to verbally give directions or supply location information. All telephones, including coin-operated phones, card-activated, cellular, and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), are part of the E911 system. Some privately-owned telephone systems, however, because of technology limitations, cannot provide location information. Nine-one-one (9-1-1) is the first call to make in any life-threatening emergency.

This is how 9-1-1 works. When the three-digit emergency number, 9-1-1, is dialed:

- The E911 system automatically routes the call to a Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) based on the caller's location. Sixty-four (64) PSAPs are located throughout Washington.
- The 9-1-1 call is answered at a PSAP.
- A trained 9-1-1 call taker at the PSAP assesses the caller's need using the emergency information automatically displayed on their monitor for quality assurance.

The 9-1-1 call taker dispatches the appropriate emergency service to the caller's location.

Background and Program

When Washington voters approved Referendum 42 in 1991 directing the counties to offer an E911 emergency communications system by Dec. 31, 1998, they understood that a life-threatening call to 9-1-1 received an immediate response. Only seven counties in Washington were offering enhanced 9-1-1 services at that time. Today E911 service is available statewide for both wireless and wireline telephones.

**Background
and Program
(cont'd)**

Wireline phones automatically display the caller's address at the 9-1-1 center, but this is another matter for wireless 9-1-1 calls. The 9-1-1 call taker receives wireless location information in map coordinates (longitude and latitude). These figures must then be placed on a map and converted to the address of the physical location of the caller in order to dispatch assistance. The Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) mandate to provide for wireless 9-1-1 location capability statewide is to be completed by December 2005. Several counties have already met the FCC requirements for cell (wireless) location.

The State E911 Program is supported by a 20 cent per month tax on all wireline telephones in the state. This tax was originally approved in 1991 by the passage of Referendum 42. In 2003 the tax base was expanded by the state Legislature to include the collection of 20 cents per month on all wireless phones, giving the counties authority to collect up to 50 cents per month on all wireline and wireless phones.

Chapter 38.52, Revised Code of Washington (RCW), established the State E911 Program to coordinate and facilitate the local planning, installation and operation of the E911 phone systems.

The State E911 staff seeks guidance from its Advisory Committee and recommends taxing levels on wireline phones to the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission. The E911 Advisory Committee assists in establishing operational standards, training opportunities and technical guidelines for viable and compatible systems statewide.

The State E911 Program offers support and assistance to counties to include operations, administration, technical, financial, training, and education, database accessibility, contingency planning, enhanced wireless 9-1-1 service. The Program also provides instant access to multi-language translator services to local government as well as supports the E911 Advisory Committee and its subcommittees. The Program ensures reliable 9-1-1 service through its participation in setting technical and operational standards at the national level.

The E911 Program contracts for and manages statewide voice and data transport for 9-1-1 calls. Today the E911 Program continues to strive toward maintaining a robust E911 network.

**How the
Program is
Funded**

Chapter 82.14B, RCW authorizes counties and the state to receive E911 taxes on telecommunications services. These taxes are collected and remitted by the telecommunications companies to the Washington State Department of Revenue.

The E911 Tax

There are four components to the E911 tax:

- A state tax of 20 cents per month on wireline telecommunications.
- A state tax of 20 cents per month on wireless telecommunications.
- A county tax of 50 cents per month on wireline telecommunications.

A county tax of 50 cents per month on wireless telecommunications.

Contact

The State E911 Program of the Washington State Military Department works with the department's Emergency Management Division to integrate E911 into the emergency response systems serving state of Washington citizens.

For more information, call Bob Oenning, State E911 Administrator, (253) 572-7011 or access the Emergency Management Division (EMD) web site at <http://www.emd.wa.gov>.